

AF-6 - Preserve Open Space/Agricultural Land

Benefit/Cost of Reducing CO₂e:

Arizona: 1.6 MMt between 2007-2020; 0.1% of 2020 emissions; \$65/ton
New Mexico: 1.6 MMt between 2007-2020; 0.2% of 2020 emissions; \$62/ton
Colorado: 0.1-1.0 MMt; unknown cost⁹

Assessment: High Priority. Bin B. 18 out of 22 votes.

Preserving open space and agricultural land should be a high priority for Utah in the face of a rapidly growing population and increasing development. While this effort may require some concerted effort among private and public stakeholders, along with federal and state governments, a coordinated effort to preserve open space and agricultural land will provide numerous benefits in the short and long-term relating to climate change, air quality, water quality, and quality of life. This is an important option near urban centers, but may be difficult to accomplish in the face of development pressure. Other states show this option to have a high cost per ton of carbon emissions, but this option has important co-benefits for ranching and forestry. It is not clear what the true costs and benefits are/will be for Utah, as they have not yet been evaluated. Preserving open space and agricultural land also coincides with other climate change options relating to transportation, renewable energy, and land use.

Sequestration and uptake is greater in agricultural land than other land uses.

Lands could be protected through conservation easements. The Federal Forest Legacy Program through USDA Forest Service provides about \$2-3 million a year to Utah. A similar effort could apply to ranches. The state should expand the LeRay McCallister Program to protect open lands.

This option could include promoting "no net loss" of agricultural land.

⁹ Reductions here occur from higher carbon retention in soil and decreased transportation activity.